

DETRITUS & ART / A personal point of view on Environment and Art by Rainer Stegmann

Artists seldom provide an interpretation of their own work; they leave this to the observer. Each of us will have his/her own individual view of a specific piece of art, seeing different contents and experiencing a range of own feelings and emotions. Bearing this in mind, I created this page where you will find regularly selected masterpieces from different epochs and I express my thoughts on what the work conveys to me personally. My interpretation will refer specifically to the theme "Environment". Any comments or suggestions regarding this column should be addressed to stegmann@tuhh.de.



PABLO PICASSO / Bull's Head, 1942.

I had the chance to see Picasso's famous sculpture Bull's Head in the Picasso Museum of Malaga, Spain. It got my immediate attention -not only because I am a person dealing with waste- but due to its simplicity, expression and beauty.

The Bull's Head is a typical example of Waste and Art (Stegmann, et.al., 2015)). With materials found by chance or by deliberate scavenging waste is transformed, repurposed, reimagined, given a new life. By these means artists give attention to sustainability and where materials come from. They may have a mission, environmental consciousness or doing it just for pleasure. Using fine arts is in my view an effective "tool" that should be used for education in the widest sense; it is inspiring and initiates creativity. We should see more art in the curricula of Universities.

I guess when Picasso saw the discarded bicycle seat and handlebar he immediately "saw" the bullhead before his eyes. This also has to do with Picasso's enthusiasm for bullfights and the beauty of bulls. I think often artists have

an idea but the final artwork develops by steady inspiration during painting or sculpting; the interpretation of their work lies with the viewer, what he or she feels, thinks about it.

Coming back to Picasso's Bulls Head: What really amazes me is the simplicity of this installation with this strong expression and aesthetic. Putting together this very simple handlebar and bicycle seat so that everybody immediately recognises a bullhead shows the genius of Picasso. In general I think what makes up a good artist, engineer and other professionals is to find creative solutions in the simplest possible way.

Now, how do I see Picasso's artwork in relation to the environment? It is obvious that it reminds me of recycling or better up-cycling, use of the value that stays in discarded objects, ironically: in case of Picasso the value probably several Millions of Euros). Picasso often used discarded materials in his collages like newspaper, pieces of wood and cardboard, may be more. The Bull's Head shows what can be done with objects from waste and it sends the message to the viewer that we should take care of items we want to get rid of, check first if they can be reused or recycled. Another aspect I see is the fun Picasso obviously had putting together seat and handlebar to a bullhead and understand this as a message not losing the fun in our work even in times of dramatic environmental situation.

Next issue: In the coming issue of DETRITUS I like to present the painting from Rene Magritte "The Lovers II", 1928, Rene Magritte (1898-1967) was a Belgian painter of Surrealism. This art direction wanted to overcome traditional experiences, ways of thinking and viewing by mixing reality with dreams. Magritte called them „Dreams, that do not lull you to sleep but want to wake you up“. He created also sculptures and was friend with Andre Breton, Paul Eluard, Joan Miro and later with Savadore Dali.

REFERENCE

Stegmann, R., van der Westhuyzen, C. 2015, From Waste to Art and from Art to Waste, Proceedings Sardinia 2015 Symposium, CISA Publisher, ISBN 978-88-6265-021-2